Da‘wah Activities of The Pakistani Barelwis: Case of the Da‘wat-i-Islami

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Da‘wah Activities of the Pakistani Barelwis: Case of the Da‘wat-i-Islami

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to highlight the da‘wah approaches and methodology of the Da‘wat-i-Islāmī (DI) and contribution along with a survey of the da‘wah activities of the Barelwis, based on primary sources. DI uses the Barelwi faith as its religious mark. Barelwis are representatives of the ‘popular’ and ‘Ṣūfī-oriented’ Islam. The driving force behind this facet of Islam is ‘to love Prophet Muḥammad (SAW) and follow his Sunna’. This is the focal point of all da‘wah activities of the Barelwis. DI started its work in Karachi in 1981. It aims at promoting and deepening love for the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW). Its next aim is to establish a society similar to the early Muslim community of Madīnah through peaceful preaching. It expanded gradually all over Pakistan and then became so conspicuous, that nowadays it is functional in more than 180 countries and thus has turned into a global tablīghī movement. It has its own edifying literature. The most important of which is Faīḍān-i-Sunnat. In this work, the Sunnah of the Prophet regarding daily affairs of life has been narrated. For the religious training, inter alia, it also holds weekly meetings in different cities and towns of Pakistan and even in some European cities as well. The members of the DI have to show their commitment to the Islamic way of life as reflected in the Faīḍān-i-Sunnat. Besides religious sector, it is also working in social and educational fields. Although it is supported with reference to its aims to build character in its individual members, it nevertheless attracts diverse criticism about some of its practices.

Keywords: Barelwi, Da‘wah, Faīḍān-i-Madīnah, Faīḍān-i-Sunnat, Ilīās Qādirī

Introduction

The failure of the 1857 War of Independence witnessed the political, social and economic decay in the Muslim institutions of India. As a result, in self-evaluation, the ‘ulamā’ (pl. of ālim, scholars), began to examine causes of the Indian Muslims’ decline, the rising influence of Hindus and coming into power of the British. They also had serious concerns about the missionary activities of the Christian and the reformist and revivalist Hindu organizations. The ‘ulamā’ were of the opinion that Christian missionaries, with the help of the British Government, were bent upon eliminating Islam from India. Fearing a drastic change in the Muslim mode of life, the ‘ulamā’ decided to take refuge in religious education for which they started establishing madāris (pl. of madrasah, religious seminaries), which were financially and administratively independent. The main purpose

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of establishing *madāris* was to retain the Muslim legacy of religious education and safeguard the religious life of the Indian Muslims.¹

Although the conclusion drawn by the ‘*ulamā*’ was in practice even before 1857, however they still hoped against the hope and thought that for the survival of Islamic way of life in the British India (1858-1947), this was the only way *i.e.* to call Islam for help. So, every Muslim religious group of the British India performed its due role in this process of seeking panacea for their followers.

2. *Da‘wah* activities of the Barelwis in the British India: A Brief Survey

The Barelwis are *Hanafi* (followers of the *Hanafi* School of Islamic Law) and the Islam preached and practiced by them is known as ‘popular,’ ‘folk-oriented,’ ‘Ṣūfī-inspired,’ and even ‘rural Islam.’ The Barelwi ‘*ulamā*’ and *mashā’ikh* (pl. of *shaykh*) offer social and religious guidance to the majority of the South Asian *Hanafi* Muslims. Besides, they struggled to counter the missionary activities of the Hindus and the Christians.

By the end of 1922, Arya Samajist Hindus re-started the socio-religious reform and to proselytize *Shuddhi* (‘state of purity’) Movement in the north of the British India. This (re)conversion procedure, inspired by classical Hinduism, also attempted to introduce proselytizing techniques particular to Islam and Christianity. In the eyes of the Arya Samajists, the Hindu decline was manifested not only in qualitative, but also in quantitative terms as most of the Hindus from the untouchable castes were converted to Islam and Christianity.² The Arya Samajists started the *Shuddhi* Movement in order to counter the missionary activities of the Muslims and the Christians.

The *Shuddhi* Movement was perceived by the Muslims as a serious threat for the beliefs of the poor and border-line Muslims, especially for the newly converted Malkanah Rajputs living in the western part of the Uttar Pradesh and eastern parts of Rajputana. The *Jama‘at Raḍā-i-Muṣṭafāḥ* (December 1920)-(JRM), according to H. B. Khan (1922-n.d), accepted this challenge first of all, and on 27 January, 1923, sent a ten-member delegation under the leadership of Mawlānā Shah Muḥammad Muṣṭafāḥ Raza Khan Barelwi (1892-1981) to the affected areas.³

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¹Mushirul Haq, “The ‘Ulama’ and the Indian Politics,” in *Islam In South Asia*, ed. Rashid Ahmad (Jullundhri) and Muhammad Afzal Qarshi (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1995), 77-78.


The delegation visited districts of Meerut, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Agra, Mathra, Etah, Attawa and Baisalpur. Owing to the missionary activities of the delegation and JRM’s workers, about four lakh Muslims were saved from re-conversion to Hinduism.⁴

Besides *Tablīgh*, a counter Muslim missionary movement started by Khawajah Hassan Nizāmī⁵ (1878-1955) and Mawlānā Muḥammad Qiyamuddīn ‘Abdul Bari of Farangi Mahal (1878-1926), the *Shuddhi* challenge of apostasy was also dealt with by other Barelwi ‘ulamā’, *mashá’ikh* and organizations as they sent *tablīghī* (missionary) delegations to the affected areas of Etah, Aligarh, Delhi, Bulandshahr, Rohtak, Farrukhabad, Mathra, Garganwan and Agra and more than ten thousand people were saved from the influence of the *Shuddhi* Movement.⁶

In 1901, Pir Sayyīd Jama‘at ‘Alī Shah ‘Alipūrī (1841-1951) founded Markazi Anjuman-i-Khuddāmul Šūffa‘-i-Hind (MAKSH) with the aims of *inter alia*, to preach Islamic and Sufi teachings and to counter the theoretical and practical activities of anti-Islam and anti-Sufism sects. The MAKSH established more than forty-five madāris and mosques in the districts of Delhi, Agra, Etah, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, Rohtak, Farrukhabad, Mathra and Garganwan to provide religious education for children, women and adults. It was claimed by the MAKSH that due to its workers’ efforts, numerous people were saved from the influence of the *Shuddhi* Movement.⁷

Mawlānā Sayyīd Ghulām Bhīk Nairang Ambalwī (1876-1952) formed the Ambala-based *Jām‘īyyat Markaziyyah Tablīgh ul-Islam* in July 1923 as a safeguard of Islam through countering the *Shuddhi* Movement and apostasy and educating and training the illiterate Muslims. This *Jām‘īyyat* was very active in the affected areas of the Panjāb, Uttar Pradesh and Rajputana during the *Shuddhi* Movement.⁸

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⁴Muḥammad Shahabbuddīn Raḍwī, *Hadur Muṣīṭ-i-‘azam-i-Hind kē siyāsī Afkar* (Bombay: Raḍā Academy, 1999), 72-76.

⁵Khawajah Hassan Nizāmī in the wake of *Shuddhi* Movement penned a number of handbills, posters and pamphlets and distributed them among Muslims in order to warn them of the *Shuddhi* Movement; Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablīghi-Jama‘at (1920-2000)* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Private Limited, 2002), 49-53.


⁷Ḥuṣain, *Ṣirat-i-Amīr-i-Millat*, 426-40 and *al-Faqīḥ*, 5 January 1924, 10; 20 February 1924, 10 and 28 July 1924, 11.

An inaugural session of the *al-Jam‘iyyat al-‘Aliyat al-Islamiyyat al-Markaziyyah* commonly known as All-India Sunni Conference (AISC) was held in March, 1925 at Moradabad. Among its other aims and objectives, the *tablīghī* work among the Muslims and non-Muslims was the most important to mention.

In his welcome address, Mawlānā Shah Muḥammad Ḥāmid Raza Khan Barelwi (1875-1943), the president of the Reception Committee of the AISC, according to his understanding, pointed out some ignominious social evils prevailing among the Indian Muslims. For their social and religious uplift, the Mawlānā identified four major fields of work. According to him, *tablīghī*, religious education, sense of security and social reforms were the only remedies.9 Referring to the Shuddhi Movement and anti-Muslim attitude of the Hindus, Mawlānā Ḥāmid Raza Khan proposed to have a *tablīghī* network at the grass root level.10 He also proposed to establish a central *madrasattablīgh* (school for missionary training), in order to train religious teachers, *manazir* (religious debaters) and preachers. This *madrasattablīgh* was also supposed to be responsible for regularizing and monitoring the whole *tablīghī* work and educating the adults, youngsters, students of Western educational institutions and children by establishing small *madāris* at every village, town and city. Mawlānā Ḥāmid Raza Khan also narrated the importance of establishing a central *dārul iftā* (board of issuing fatwa) and *dārul tasniyf* (board of research and writing) as supportive organs for the *tablīghī*.11

3. *Da‘wah* Activities of the Barelwis in Pakistan: A Glimpse

The social structure of the Muslim society in Pakistan has been profoundly influenced and shaped by the popular Islam. The vast majority of Pakistani people steeped in traditional religious mode of thought and action. Here Barelwis’ influence has been prevalent largely among rural population, mainly due to their strong affiliation with different *Sufi* Orders. However, they do have a considerable number of devoted followers in urban areas. Grass-root level-celebrations of the *Milādul Nabī* [birth celebration of the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW)], *mahafil-i-nāa‘t* [meetings arranged to pay salutation to the Prophet Muḥammad (SAW)], *ā’rās* (annual death ceremonies of a Ṣūfī ‘l-‘ālim) and other religious ceremonies, *khanqahs* (hospices) and some social services are working as a *da‘wah* tools for mobilizing Pakistani Barelwis on religious grounds and making the Barelwi network broader and stronger. Barelwi *madāris*, religio-political and social organizations, series of ideological literature, spiritual bonds and chains of *tariyqat* (sufism), system of issuance of talismans, print, electronic media and Internet are also playing their due role in enhancing the hold of popular Islam in Pakistani society. Nevertheless, *khanqahs* and mosques are a main source of socio-political as well as

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10Ibid., 143-45.
economic status of the ‘ulamā,’ especially Barelwis. The broad acceptance of this Islam is mainly due to the fact that it provides a chance to do catharsis vis-à-vis the daily problems of the masses.

Although, in January and March 1948 the Barelwi Mashā’ikh and ‘ulamā’ formed Jam‘īyyatul Mashā’ikh and Markazi Jam‘īyyatul ‘Ulamā’-i-Pakistan (MJUP) as their religio-political parties, respectively, however their main field of work remained the teaching and preaching of Islam.

After the creation of Pakistan in August 1947, the Barelwi ‘ulamā’ with the consultation of the Indian Barelwi ‘ulamā’, decided to establish Idārah-i-Tablīgh, under the supervision of Mawlānā ‘Abdul Ḥāmid Badāyūnī (1898-1970) in order to continue the religious and tablīghī activities of the AISC.12

By April 1955, the MJUP also decided to reactivate its tablīghī wing Bazm-i-Tanzīm under the leadership of Mawlānā Ghulām Muḥammad Tarannum (1900-59). The Bazm was supposed to publish tracts and pamphlets for the education and training of the Pakistanis related to the Islamic rituals and to inculcate in them the love for Allah and the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).13

An international missionary organization, World Federation of Islamic Missions (WFIM), vowing to have comprehensive program of service for the Muslims, was established in August 1958 by Dr Muḥammad Fazlur Rahman al-Qādirī (1914-74). The main objectives of the WFIM were inter alia, to establish Islamic missions and other humanitarian institutions in different countries for the propagation of Islam; to establish institutions for training Islamic missionaries, scholars and Muslim social workers; to conduct research on Islam and other religions and ideologies; and to publish literature propagating the cause of Islam.14 The WFIM has steered its activities according to its objectives and has established inter alia, The ‘Alimiyyah Institute of Islamic Studies in 1958 at Karachi, Pakistan. Since May 1964, it has been publishing a bi-lingual monthly journal The Minaret International that carries articles on different aspects of Islam and Islamic way of life. The current president of the WFIM is Muṣṭafah Fāḍil Ansari, the elder son of Dr al-Qādirī.

On 25 November, 1961, at Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), a meeting of the Barelwi ‘ulamā’ was held where it was decided to form Markāzī Idārah-i-Ta’mīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat Pakistan. The aims and objectives of the Idārah were to propagate the teachings of the

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14For details see, monthly The Minaret (Karachi), October 1998, (Special Issue). For the constitution of the WFIM see, Umair Mahmood Siddiqui, (comp.), The Beacon Light (Karachi: Islamic Research and Publications Bureau, 2015), 392-413.
Qur’ān and Sunnah (the way of Holy Prophet) and to reform the Pakistani society accordingly.\textsuperscript{15} The Idārah has tried to curtail the activities of the Christian missionaries; published several tablīghī tracts; and reconverted more than one 1000 people to Islam who embraced Christianity.\textsuperscript{16}

Barelwi ‘ulamā’ of Karachi, after June 1962, formed Markāz Anjuman-i-Tablīghul Islām with the sole aim and objective of preaching of Islam. Mawlānā ‘Abdul Ḥāmid Badāyūnī was its president while Mawlānā Muḥammad Shafti Okrāwī (1929-84) was its Nāẓim-i-A’lā (secretary general).\textsuperscript{17}

The Barelwi ‘ulamā’ of Lahore under the leadership of Mawlānā Muḥammad Saʿīd Aḥmad Naqshbandī in 1971, formed a Sunnī Tablīghī Jamāʿat Pakistan in order to propagate the teachings of the Qur’ān and Sunnah, revive and safeguard the mission of the Ṣūfīa’, to counter the then prevailing secular ideas and to reform the social and moral values of the Pakistani society. The Jamāʿat held its weekly meetings in the Bilal Mosque and distributed faith oriented literature.\textsuperscript{18}

The most important and active organization for the worldwide propagation of Islam was established in January 1973 at Makkah. The leading Pakistani and Indian Barelwi ‘ulamā’, in a meeting held on the occasion of Hajj, decided to establish the, al-dawa’at Islāmiyyah al-‘alamīyyah better known as World Islamic Mission (WIM).\textsuperscript{19} Mawlānā Shah Ahmad Nūrānī Ṣiddīqī (1926-2003) then president of the Jamʿiyat-i-Ulamā’i-Pakistan (JUP), was nominated as the head of the Mission. Eventually, the World Islamic Mission has grown to serve the cause of Islam and Muslims across Europe, the United States of America, North America, Africa and Asia. For the accomplishment of its mission, an Islamic Missionary College was established at Bradford, United Kingdom (UK) on 30 July 1974, which was followed by the establishment of more schools and masājid mostly almost all over the Europe.\textsuperscript{20} The headquarters of the Mission is in Manchester, UK. Presently, Shah Muḥammad Anas Nūrānī Ṣiddīqī Madanī (b.1966), the elder son of Mawlānā Nūrānī is the head of the Mission.

The WIM stands for the promotion and propagation of Islamic message and knowledge, inculcation of love and respect for the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and enhancement of social development of the Muslims. The Mission’s Welfare Trust vows to help needy people, especially the Muslims around the World.

\textsuperscript{15}Fortnightly Rīḍwān (Lahore), 2 December 1961, 15-16.
\textsuperscript{16}Monthly Rīḍwān (Lahore), July-August 1975, 5-6.
\textsuperscript{17}Monthly Sou-i-Hijaz (Lahore), July 2002, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{18}Muḥammad Saʿīd Aḥmad Naqshbandī, ed. Chalīs Isbaq (Lahore: Sunnī Tablīghī Jamāʿat Pakistan, 1972), 7-9, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{19}Monthly Raḍā-i-Muṣṭafa (Gujranwala), February 1974, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{20}Fortnightly Nida-i-Aḥl-i-Sunnat (Lahore), 16-31 January 1992, 5-8 and monthly Ahwal-o-Athar (Lahore), December 1997, 9-11.
Dr Muḥammad Ṭāhirul Qādirī (b. 1951), for the worldwide propagation of Islam founded the Idārah-i-Minhājul Qur’ān in October 1980 at Lahore. The Idārah, now with an international exposure, has worldwide followers and a long list of publications, besides its own online Minhājj TV network, started in July 2011 from Paris, France.

Mawlānā Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Qādirī (b. 1961), in February 2001 formed the Tablīgh-i-Islāmī (TI) for the preaching of Islam. Lahore-based TI is a relatively new da‘wah organization of the Barelwis working in major cities of Pakistan and addresses almost all the strata of the society.

Dr Farida Ahmad Siddiqi (1935-2013) younger sister of Mawlānā Nurānī, most probably was the first woman, who started da‘wah activities for the Pakistani women. She founded Karachi-based Khawatin Islamic Mission in 1959, for the religious education and training of women. The Mission also has its branches in some European countries and runs an Islamic University for Women which was established in 1990 at Karachi.

Besides, all these institutionalized da‘wah activities, almost every madrasah has its own da‘wah center from where the gross root level of da‘wah activities are been done.

4. Da‘wati-Islami

In September 1981, a meeting of leading Barelwi ‘ulamā’ and some leaders of the JUP was held in Karachi where the need for a Barelwis’ tablighī organization was seriously felt. ‘Allāmah Arshadul Qādirī (1924-2002), an Indian Barelwi ālim suggested the name of the DI and Mawlānā Muḥammad Wiqāruddīn Qādirī Radwī (1915-92) proposed the name of Mawlānā Iliās Qādirī as the head of the DI. Thus, DI was launched in September 1981 with the motto, ‘love for the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and Maḏīnah.’ According to the directives of the DI, every member has to take oath that

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24 Monthly Jahān-i-Raḍā (Lahore), April 2011, 86-87, (Da’wat-i-Islāmī nambar). The meeting was held at the residence of Mawlānā Nurānī then president of the JUP and was presided at by ‘Allāmah Sayyīd Ahmad Sa’īd Shah Kazimī (1913-86), the founder Nāzim-i-A’lā of the MJUP. However, the DI did not own this statement and considered Mawlānā Iliās Qādirī as a founder of the DI. Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, Da’wat-i-Islāmī kā T‘āruf (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Maḏīnah, n. d.), 1-2 and Jahān-i-Raḍā, November-December 2005, 36-40. According to Mawlānā Iliās Qādirī, ‘Allāmah Arshadul Qādirī changed this name by Sunnī Tablīghī Jamā’at, which was unacceptable for me and I continued my missionary work under the name of the DI. Jahān-i-Raḍā, April 2011, 182-90.
I must try to rectify myself and the people of the whole World. To rectify ourselves, we will act upon the Madani Ināmāt (a card of daily manual) and to rectify the people of the whole World, we will travel in the Madani Qāfilah (missionary journey/walk in the form of caravan).\(^{25}\)

Mawlānā Abu Bilal Muḥammad Ilīās Qādirī (b.1950) belongs to a Karachi-based Memon family. He is a murīd (spiritual disciple) of Sialkot born Mawlānā Muḥammad Dīāuddīn Ahmad Qādirī Madanī (1877-1981),\(^{26}\) and one and the only khālifah (vicegerent) of Mawlānā Wiqāruddīn Qādirī.\(^{27}\) Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī not a formal ‘ālim, right from his childhood was a religious minded person. In his early life, he was active in various Barelwi religious organizations like Jama’at-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat Pakistan (1956) and Anjuman-i-Talābah’-i-Islam (January 1968). With this affiliation, he used to study the books written by Barelwi ‘ulamā’, particularly of Mawlānā Shah Muḥammad Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi (1856-1921). During these days, he also remained associated with Mawlānā Wiqāruddīn Qādirī more than twenty years.\(^{28}\) Before the formal formation of the DI, Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī visited Sri Lanka during February-May 1980 as his first-ever foreign tablīghī visit.\(^{29}\) Nowadays, among his followers, Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī is known as the Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat (leader of the Sunnis), wali-i-kamil (perfect and pious person), and even one of the mujaddadīn (renewers) of the fifteenth century A.H.\(^{30}\)

The DI was founded on the principles of da’wah to follow the Sunnah in order to be virtuous. Its aims are ‘to promote and deepen the love for the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the early Muslim community of Madīnah’. The movement stands for the revival and resurgence of Islam through peaceful preaching. Its main characteristic is to preach ‘what is righteous and what is forbidden’ and to reform the lives of Muslims according to the teachings of the Sharī’ah (Islamic Law).\(^{31}\) The members of the DI are so keen on following the Sunnan (pl. of Sunnah) that they always wear white clothes, a Green

\(^{25}\)These journeys / walks are of three, eight, 12 and 30 days.

\(^{26}\)Abu Bilal Muḥammad Ilīās ‘attar Qādirī Raḍwī, Sayyīdī Qutb-i-Madīnah (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, n. d.), 4-5.

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 1-2. He also has his bay’at in four famous Sufī orders namely Qādirīyah, Chishtiyyah, Suhrwardīyyah and Naqshbandīyyah.

\(^{28}\)Abu Kalīm Fānī, Mukhtaṣar Tadhkirah Mashā’ikh-i-Qādirīyah Raḍwīyyah ‘atṭāriyyah (Lahore: Muslim Kitābwī, 2004), 148.


\(^{30}\)Ibid., 48-50 and Malik ‘adil Raḍā, Ihya’-i-Sunnat maīn Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat aīr Da’wat-i-Islāmī kā kirdār (Lahore: Ḥaqq Publications, n. d.), 57. DI took Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī as a mujaddid in the sense that he revived several Sunnan.

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turban (previously it was dark Brown)\textsuperscript{32} and a \textit{miswāḵ} (a wooden stick used in place of a toothbrush) in their pockets.\textsuperscript{33}

The class-orientation of the DI is mainly middle and lower middle strata of the Pakistani society living in rural and urban areas of the country. The people having different age groups and socio-economic background are also associated with the DI. As far as rest of the world is concerned, mostly young generation is interested in it. The Ḥanafī School of Law is the official school of the movement, so it is very rare that followers of the other Muslim Schools of Law can be counted among its members. The DI hardly involve itself into inter and intra sects conflicts.

5. Expansion of the DI

During its early days, the DI held its weekly meetings at the Kharadar Mosque, Karachi then at its former center, Gulzar-i-Habib Mosque (1973), Soldier Bazar, Karachi every Thursday after the evening prayer. After recitation from the \textit{Qurʿān} and the salutation for the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), one of its preachers would give a speech on a spiritual and moral topic, followed by a speech of Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī, through which he used to explain solutions of day-to-day problems in terms of Islamic law. The following day, after the Friday prayer, a small group of preachers, under the leadership of Mawlānā Qādirī, visited other areas of Karachi. They offered the remaining prayers at the central mosque of the area. Mawlānā Qādirī briefed local residents about the basic teachings of Islam between prayers.\textsuperscript{34} During these days, the \textit{muballighin} (preachers) of the DI used to give \textit{darūs} (lectures) from the Urdu translation of \textit{Mukashaftul Qulūb} (the exposition of the hearts) written by Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ghazzali (1058-1111).\textsuperscript{35}

The DI expanded rapidly in Karachi in one year’s time, as the weekly meetings began to be held in some three hundred mosques.\textsuperscript{36} Nowaddays, the central weekly \textit{ijtimā‘} (gathering) is held every Thursday after \textit{Maghrib} (evening) prayers at international center

\textsuperscript{32}From the JUP side, it was claimed that the color of turban was changed on the directions of the JUP leadership, just to differentiate with the followers of Mawlānā Nūrānī. Quarterly \textit{Anwar-i-Rida} (Joharabad), October-December 2009, 495-96. However, being a Qādirī Shaykh, Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī also uses brown \textit{chadar}. In February 2018, the DI allowed his followers to wear turban of any one among these seven colors (Black, Dark Grey, Yellow, Saffron, White, Red-striped and Green) used by the Prophet. \textit{Open Letter of Muhammad Ilīās Qādirī,} dated 23 February 2018.

\textsuperscript{33}For details see, Sayyīd Fād ‘abbas Qamar, \textit{Ittiba’ Sunnat-i-Nabawī aūr Da’wat-i-Islāmī} (Lahore: Muslim Kitābwī, 2000) and Raḍā, \textit{Ihya’-i-Sunnat maını Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat kā kirdār}.

\textsuperscript{34}It is stated that at the beginning, Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī used to travel by buses, trains and even on foot, having his food with him. He also used to visit patients, gave bath to the corpses and led their funeral prayers as a part of his \textit{da’wah} strategy. Shu’bah Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat, Majlis al-Madīnah al-‘alamīyyah, \textit{Tadhkirah-i-Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat, Qist (1)} (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, 2008), 6-7.

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Jahān-i-Rida}, November - December 2005, 42.

\textsuperscript{36}Qādirī, \textit{Amīr Da’wat-i-Islāmī kī khidmāt}, 73-76.
of the DI, Faīḍān-i-Madīnah (Blessings of Maḍīnah) (May 2005), Karachi. The movement expanded quietly in the Sindh and later throughout Pakistan. It then became conspicuous and influential, and kept on spreading over more than 180 countries of the world, including Middle East, thus constituting a veritably transnational tablīghī movement.

6. Contribution of the DI

DI struggles for the implementation of the Niẓām-i-Muṣṭafah i.e. the dīn (system) given by as well as through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) by peaceful preaching of the Sunnah to establish an Islamic society in Pakistan. In addition to the weekly meetings in the various large and small cities and towns of Pakistan, its annual ījtimāʾ in different metropolitan areas of Pakistan and even in Europe are held. Thus far, it has held annual meetings in Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore, and Multan. The DI established secretariats in both Karachi and Lahore, naming them Faīḍān-i-Madīnah. In nearly every city of Pakistan, the DI has established religious schools and libraries. On 11 March

37In these ījtimāʾāt, besides normal performing of Islamic rituals, recitation from the Qurʾān, naʿt, reformative speeches, repentance, zikr, imagination, and visualization of Maḍīnah, salām, duʿā, education and training of the participants are the main features. Daily Jang (Lahore), 11 April 2008.


39It is claimed by the DI, that after Hajj, its annual ījtimāʾ was the second largest gathering of Muslims. Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, Daʿwat-i-Islāmī kā t’āruf, 16. However, due to security reasons, the annual ījtimāʾ is not being held since 2008. Instead of ‘open’, DI preferred to hold indoor ījtimāʾāt.

40Ibid., 4.

41The first-ever of its kind was established in 1995 at New Karachi with the name of Jāmiʿah al-Madīnah. Till 2015, there were 207 male Jāmiʿah al-Madīnah working not only in Pakistan but also in India, UK, South Africa, Nepal, Kenya and Bangladesh with an enrollment of 14,343 students and 1,107 teachers. Likewise, there are 195 female Jāmiʿah al-Madīnah working not only in Pakistan but also in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh with an enrollment of 12,389 students. Besides, Dars-i-Niẓāmī, some selected Jāmiʿah al-Madīnah also offers short courses in Islamic Jurisprudence, computer, Arabic and English languages. Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, Daʿwat-i-Islāmī kā t’āruf, 32.
2013, the President of Pakistan gave his assent to the Act of Parliament (No. V of 2013) for the establishment of Dar-ul-Madina International University (DMIU), a project of the DI. The principal seat of the DMIU is in Islamabad and it can establish its campuses, colleges, institutes, offices, research or study centers and other facilities in Pakistan and abroad. The DMIU is supposed to be open for all persons and for all types of knowledge.\(^{42}\)

The establishment of the university can be taken as another bold step for transforming DI into a transnational educational movement as well.

DI has its own edifying literature, the most important of which is \textit{Faīḍān-i-Sunnat} (Blessings of the Sunnah), compiled by Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī. In this voluminous work, Mawlānā Qādirī narrated the \textit{Sunan} of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regarding affairs of daily life. According to Wasīm Qādirī, \textit{Faīḍān-i-Sunnat} is the most popular book after the \textit{Qur’ān} (in Pakistan).\(^{43}\) Besides \textit{Faīḍān-i-Sunnat}, some booklets, lectures and speeches of Mawlānā Qādirī recorded on audio cassettes and CDs in different international and South Asian regional languages are also regarded a source of inspiration for the members of the DI. The DI also publishes works by other Barelwi ‘ulamā’, particularly of Mawlānā Ahmad Raza Khan Barelwi to whom Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī has very strong ideological affiliation.

Although, the \textit{Markazi Majlis-i-Shura} (central consultative body), as a supreme body has a considerable hold on the DI’s members and more than ninety different departments from the very beginning, it has been a centralized movement, revolving around the personality of Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī. The center in Karachi authorizes \textit{amīrs} of provinces, cities, and towns to work in accordance with the directions of the center. Local \textit{amīrs} come regularly to the center for training and guidance. The DI organizes different courses for the education and training of its preachers.\(^{44}\) For remaining in close contact with the different branches of the DI, Mawlānā Qādirī used to travel regularly all over Pakistan. Nowadays, this practice is continued by Abu Asayyid Ahmad ‘ubaid Raza (b.1980) the elder son of Mawlānā Qādirī and some senior members of the movement. The members must show their commitment to the Islamic way of life as is reflected compendiously in the \textit{Faīḍān-i-Sunnat}. Every male member is required to participate in the twelve \textit{madanī kām} (personal rituals) arranged by the local units besides performing more than forty personal duties.\(^{45}\)

Every male member have to fill \textit{Madanī In’āmāt} containing seventy-two directives for his daily performance and have to hand it over to the local \textit{zimahdar} (focal person) of the DI

\(^{42}\text{The Gazette of Pakistan (Extraordinary), Islamabad, March 14, 2013, 99-106.}\)
\(^{43}\text{Qādirī, \textit{Amīr Da’wat-i-Islāmī kī khidmāt}, 118.}\)
\(^{44}\text{Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, \textit{Da’wat-i-Islāmī kā t’āruf}, 38-39.}\)
\(^{45}\text{Sayyīd Rashid ‘Alī Gardaizī, \textit{Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat aūr Da’wat-i-Islāmī} (Rawalpindi: Anjuman-i-Taraqī-i-‘ilm, n. d.), 54-58. Among these \textit{madanī kām}, daily call for the fajr prayer, daily \textit{dars} from \textit{Faīḍān-i-Sunnat} at any shop, office or roadside and full day \textit{i’tikāf} on Friday are most important to point out.}\)
within the first ten days of every Islamic month. The center discourages the reading and discussing of anything other than the Faīḍān-i-Sunnat in the meetings. In addition to male participants, it has a considerable enrollment of Pakistani women, children, calling them madani munnay (kids) and even jinns are murīd and members of the DI.

As it is a da‘wah movement, there is no membership fee in the DI. All expenditures incurred in the movement are mostly met by generous donations of DI’s well-wishers, living all over the World. Zakat (compulsory alms), ṣadqāt (pl. of ṣadaqah, voluntarily alms) including ṣadaqah-i-fiṭr (alms for ‘idul fiṭr) and hides of sacrificial animals on ‘id-i-qurbān (‘id of sacrifice) is another major source of the DI’s income.

7. Da‘wah Methodology and Approach of the DI

The DI has very strong and effective network for religious mobilization and training of its followers. It has more than ninety departments for the social and religious services of the community. For example, in the religious field, the DI has established Majlis-i-Tehqiqat-i-Shari‘ah (research council of Islamic Law) and Dārul iftā’ Ahl-i-Sunnat (Ahlu-Sunnat’s board of issuing fatwa) at Karachi in November 2000, from where everybody can ask for fatwa, even on the mobile phone. This dārul iftā’ gives fatāwā (pl. of fatwa) in Arabic, English and Urdu languages. In addition, it gives practical training for giving fatwa

46 Abu Bilal Muḥammad Ilyas ‘attar Qādirī Raḍwī, Bīyānāt-i-‘attārīyyah, Vol. 1(Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, n. d.), 256. However, for women, Madānī In‘āmāt contains 63 directives. 63 Madānī In‘āmāt (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, n. d.). For male and female adult students of dinī education, Madānī In‘āmāt are 92 and 83 respectively. Whereas, for male and female child students of dinī education, Madānī In‘āmāt are 40 and for deaf and dumb these are 27. Majlis al-Madīnah al-‘ālamīyyah, Naʾī Muslim kī dard bhar Ḥasanat bharī Dastan (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, n. d.), 12.


48Telephonic conversation with one of members of the Markazi Majlis-i-Shura of the DI, who wanted to remain anonymous, dated 26 February 2011. However, according to a press report, during the month of Ramadan (August 2011), over Rs. 20 million were collected only from the Pakistan Air Force for the DI. Daily The Express Tribune (Karachi), 12 September 2011.

49Some important majālis, as DI calls them are, Majlis Madānī Qāfīlī (in and outside Pakistan); Majlis Ta‘mir-i-Masājid; Majlis Jāil Khānahjāt; Majlis Maktābāt wa Ta‘wilhat-i- ‘attārīyyah / also on Online; Majlis Istikhārah; Majlis for training of Ḥujjāj; Majlis Dārul iftā’ (also on telephone and Internet); Majlis Nashr-o-Ishā‘at; Majlis for weekly ijtihād (in and outside Pakistan) and Majlis Rābi‘ah bil ‘ulamā’ wa mashā‘ik. Jang, 11 April 2008. For the duties of these majālis see, Gardaizī, Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat aūr Da‘wat-i-Islāmī, 51-55.
to the youngsters. Most of the fatāwā issued by dārul iftā’ Ahl-i-Sunnat are published.\textsuperscript{50} Besides, online services are also available for seeking fatwa, ta’wīdh (amulet)\textsuperscript{51} and even becoming a murid of Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī by clicking www.dawateislami.net.\textsuperscript{52} The DI has also established its own research oriented publishing house with the name of al-Madīnah al-‘ālamīyyah from where the literature related to the DI and the other Barelwi ‘ulamā’ is being printed and distributed all over the World. In the social sector, its services are extended even in the jails where the prisoners are being educated and trained in the light of Islamic teachings along with the distribution of some necessities of daily life.\textsuperscript{53} It has also established small hospital in Karachi\textsuperscript{54} that tries to divert peoples’ attention towards spiritual treatment of their physical and socio-economic problems.\textsuperscript{55}

After the devastating earthquake of October 2005 and heavy floods of July 2010 in Pakistan, the DI provided rehabilitation services in the affected areas. From Hajj 2008, DI also started, as a regular feature of its strategy to train the intending pilgrims. In September 2008, it established its own Madanī TV Channel. This Channel is a breakthrough in the da’wah approach and methodology of the DI.\textsuperscript{56} In January 2017, it also launched a monthly


\textsuperscript{51}It was claimed by the DI that until March 2012, the Majlis-i-Maktūbāt wa ta’wīdhāt-i-‘ajtārīyyah had issued more than 2.6 million ta’wīdh annually with an average of more than 4,00,000 within a month in and outside Pakistan. This Majlis also conducts istikhārah (counseling prayer) for the saddened people. \textit{Ibid.}, 362-363. However, women are not allowed to contact directly with this Majlis. Likewise, non-Muslims and followers of opponent sects are also not allowed to get benefit from this service.

\textsuperscript{52}Through this service more than 1,50,000 people are being benefited monthly.


\textsuperscript{54}Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, \textit{Da’wat-i-Islāmī kā t’āruf}, 33.


\textsuperscript{56}It is important to note that in July 2002, a fatwa was issued from the Dārul iftā’ Ahl-i-Sunnat declaring income of cable network and watching Television as haram. Fatāwā-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat Nambar 1, 24-25 and Raḍā-i-Muṣṭafāh (Gujranwala), October 2009, 13, 24. However, it was admitted by the DI that its anti-Televised movement failed to convince the people that watching
Urdu magazine, Fa‘īdān-i-Madīnah which is being read widely. An English version of this magazine is also being published from Birmingham, UK.

In order to attract the religious minded people trained by the Bareli ‘ulamā’ and pīrs, it is usual in the DI to narrate the dreams, prophecies and conformation of forgiveness for those who attend its ījtīmā‘ āt (pl. of ījtīmā’). It claims that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) sends salām (blessing) for the participants of these ījtīmā‘ āt. The DI has also published books showing that Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī can appear anywhere at any time and he has spiritual powers to help his murīds even against the jinns.

8. Conclusion

The DI aims to build good character in its members, particularly the young generation and to establish religious institutions. Nevertheless, it attracts diverse criticism about some of its practices and creeds. DI does not propagate the complete teachings and philosophy of Islam as it emphasizes only on the sunnat-i-mustahihah (non-mandatory). Its erstwhile over-emphasis on wearing the turban, preferably green not only irritated common Muslims, but also ‘ulamā’ and mashā’ikh were reluctant to endorse it. They do not consider wearing the green turban as compulsory (sunnat-i-mu’akkadah). In fact, they hold that any type of cap or white or black colored turban can be used to cover one’s head. DI requires each of


57 Markazi Majlis-i-Shura, Da’wat-i-Islāmī kā T’āruf, 4. In the Fa‘īdān-i-Sunnat, there are several dreams and prophecies describing the virtuousness and sacredness of Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī. Muhammad Ilīās Qādirī, Fa‘īdān-i-Sunnat (Karachi: Maktabatul al-Madīnah, 1988), 43-48. In this edition of the Fa‘īdān-i-Sunnat, there were 11 endorsements written by Pakistani, Indian and Saudi Arabian ‘ulamā’. However, in the 2006 edition, there were only three endorsements written by Pakistani and Indian ‘ulamā’.

58 Majlis al-Madīnah al-‘ālamīyyah, Quam-i-Jinnāt a‘ūr Amīr-i-Ahl-i-Sunnat, 105, 152-154, 204-226.

59 For the refutation of these criticisms see, Abu Kalīm Muḥammad Ṣiddīq, Mithi Mithi Sunnatiyyan a‘ūr Da’wat-i-Islāmī (Lahore: Muslim Kitābwī, 2001). Due to some theological and personal differences with Mawlānā Ilyās Qādirī, Mawlānā Muḥammad Ṣhākir ‘Ali Nūrī Raḍī in charge of Indian chapter of the DI, in 1991, formed his own faction with the name of Sunnī Da’wat-i-Islāmī. For details see, Mujeeb Ahmad, “Conservative in Belief, Modern in Techniques Da’wat-i-Islami: A Revivalist Movement of the Barelsis,” Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 34 (Winter 2011) No. 2: 78-81.
its members to become a *murīd* of Mawlānā Qādirī in *Qādirīyah Raḍwīyyah ‘aṭṭāriyyah* chain.60

DI is apolitical movement working for the preaching of the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah* almost all over the World. Although, its emphasis is on the ‘religion as cult’, however, it does believe in ‘religion as moral action’. It does not bother to talk about economic exploitation; international issues concerning Muslims, particularly the prevailing wave of terrorism and extremism and very surprisingly even in the blasphemy issue.

DI wants to bring Muslim back to the *Sunnah* and save them from the westernization of their daily life. As a transnational movement, DI systematically focuses on new generation, who tend to be secondarily in traditional Islamic religious fields, which are usually dominated by male elders. The Islamic life style allows them to re-shape the Islamic religious field in their immediate environment. DI also propagates an inexpensive and healthy lifestyle free of intoxication and promiscuity.61 Although DI, by utilizing diverse media, made Barelwi interpretation of Islam available Online (‘media religion’ instead of ‘conventional religion’), however, it has also published works on explaining the logic/reason and philosophy of Islamic rituals.62

DI claims to practice Islam more broadly, based on the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah*. Its intention is to strengthen religious beliefs and reinforce their observance. As a rule, DI does not seek to convert non-Muslims, however, due to its preaching some non-Muslim and even jinn converted to Islam in and outside Pakistan.63


It has made its mission run through enthusiastic zikr and na‘t sessions, ḍhurs and milād celebrations.64 Mawlānā Ilīās Qādirī and DI have been mentioned among the 500 most influential Muslims of the World and an important revivalist movement of the Barelwis among other important international Islamic networks, respectively from 2010 to 2018.65

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*Da‘wah Activities of the Pakistani Barelwis*

**Unpublished**


*Open Letter of Muḥammad Iliās Qādirī, dated 23 February 2018.*

Telephonic conversation with one of members of the *Markazī Majlis-i-Shūrā* of the DI dated 26 February 2011.